

Newman Catholic College

Harlesden Road, London NW10 3RN

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 18-19 May 2017



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is outstanding

- This thriving, diverse community provides a stimulating religious education curriculum that is accessible to pupils from a very wide range of faith traditions.
- The religious education curriculum fully meets the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory.
- Pupils achieve exceptionally well in religious education given their typically challenging starting points. By the end of Year 11, pupils perform as well in religious education as they do in other core areas.
- The very positive impact of teaching on the pupils' progress is supported exceptionally well by the wrap-around care for the pupils. Day-to-day classroom practice is at least good with many outstanding features. It is developing well as beginning teachers hone their skills.
- Sixth-form provision for core religious education is creative and inspiring, and embraced warmly by students of all faiths.
- The leader of the department models excellent practice in his approach to the Church's education mission, in his contribution to the school's Catholic life, and in his management of religious education.
- A real strength of the department is the support of unqualified staff to become fully-fledged teachers.
- Self-evaluation is honest and generally accurate.
- The senior leaders and governors support the religious education department very well.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- The school community very clearly lives out the Gospel values in its daily life. Pupils flourish here, growing in their understanding and practice of their Newman values. All pupils, whatever their traditions, participate as fully as possible in its Catholic life.
- Religious education is given high priority within the curriculum. Provision meets all the requirements of resource allocation at each key stage.
- The time allocation at each key stage meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Pupils experience a wide range of opportunities for prayer and participation in the liturgical life of the Church. Prayer frames each day and penetrates many areas of the curriculum. Pupils also participate in many Catholic traditions, including pilgrimages, locally and overseas.
- Key relationships with parents, carers, local parishes, other Catholic schools and the Diocese of Westminster are exceptionally strong.
- The Gospel call to justice and service is understood very well by the school community and is at the heart of all that it does. Respect for their own and others' cultural background and talents underpins the warm relationships throughout the school community.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, go the extra mile to ensure and support the school's Catholic ethos and the impact of the religious education department.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection, the school was asked to track robustly the progress of groups of pupils in religious education (RE), encourage deeper thinking by the pupils, and ensure that feedback to pupils supports improvements in their work. RE is part of the current whole-school tracking and monitoring of groups of pupils' attainment and progress. The systems also check the impact of interventions. Moderation takes place with other Catholic secondary schools to ensure the validity of assessments. The RE department has played a leading role in spreading good practice in providing pupils with supportive feedback on their work. It has also ensured the necessary funding to allow an RE specialist to qualify as a teacher. The department has made very good progress in the period since the last inspection, including in relation to pupils' attainment and progress at all stages.

The content of classroom religious education is outstanding

The content of RE meets all of the requirements of the Curriculum Directory. The programmes of study are creative and engaging and meet the needs of the diverse groups, ensuring accessibility for the many pupils new to English and from other faith traditions. Resources are very well considered and are used very creatively to extend pupils' religious literacy, within and outside, of the classroom. This was clearly seen in the pupils' work on Pentecost, for example. The scheme of work is comprehensive, building very carefully year on year so that the systematic build-up allows all students, even recent arrivals, to grow well in their religious literacy. Guidance to staff on the requirements of the Curriculum Directory is very thorough and effective and well linked to assessment procedures. The study of other faiths is integral to the programme of study. Judaism features notably and leads to particularly developmental discussion about the inter-links between faith traditions, including Islam and Hinduism. This work does much to help cement the excellent relationships between the different faith groups in the school.

Pupil achievement in religious education is outstanding

The college has improved the pupils' achievement in RE since the last inspection. Pupils join with a very wide range of starting points. Some have little or no English, including a significant number of refugees and asylum seekers. Many join the college at other than standard times. Given the challenges of the cohorts, the pupils do exceptionally well in religious education, reaching standards that are very similar to English. Nearly 60% of the pupils achieve an A*-C grade in religious education. This represents at least good, and mostly outstanding, progress for these pupils. Some groups make very fast progress, including those with very challenging starting points and those who join the school throughout the year. Although there is still scope to increase the rates of progress of a few able and some disadvantaged pupils who have spent all of their time in the school, the value added to the pupils' learning overall in RE is excellent. This added value would place the school in the top 10% of schools nationally, if similar measures to those for English and mathematics were applied. The pattern of achievement and progress at Key Stage 3 is similar to that at Key Stage 4. The department uses the diocesan base-line check very effectively to assess the needs of the pupils on entry. As a result of the wrap-around provision, pupils' development in religious literacy grows over time in the school, supported well by the pupils' growth of fluency in English in many cases. A significant number of pupils from other faiths make excellent progress in their understanding of the Catholic faith. Many have had no previous Catholic contacts. Results in advanced level religious education courses have been successful with all students gaining at least a pass grade in the most recent examination series. In the core RE course, students of all faiths develop very well in using the religious language of narrative and in their understanding of the links between the major world religions. Both post-16 students and younger pupils are superb ambassadors, bearing witness to the excellent progress they have made over their time, short or long, in the school. They display a

genuine thirst for learning about the faith. Both internal and external moderation procedures are very robust. External moderation is thorough and takes place with other Catholic secondary schools. Staff have very high expectations for these pupils and they respond exceptionally well, developing high aspirations for the future.

The quality of teaching is good

Overall, the impact of teaching is at least good with many outstanding elements. Classroom practice is developing very well but is not yet consistently outstanding as the department manages and trains home-grown specialist qualified RE teachers. The overall impact of the department's work is greater than the sum of the individual lessons seen. Outstanding aspects of the work observed during the inspection include the meticulous attention to the individual needs of the pupils. The use of key words is very effective in developing the pupils' language skills and religious literacy so that the progress made by pupils in expressing their understanding of the faith is exemplary. This is particularly so for those joining the school with no English or with other faith backgrounds. Above all, superb working relationships support the pupils' engagement in class activities and in their involvement in school life. These elements were seen clearly in a post-16 class where a non-Catholic student spontaneously commented, 'I would love to have met Jesus'. In three Year 10 classes, pupils preparing for GCSE examinations variously came to grips very well with concepts of the incarnation, the Trinity, and with the transformative impact of suffering. Despite some excellent examples of outstanding classroom practice, the quality of teaching varies in the rigour with which staff manage the expected meticulous feedback to pupils and the deepening of the understanding of some of the most able. In a few cases, the deployment of some support staff is not especially helpful. However, this is more about the stages of training and experience of some members of staff than about any significant inadequacies. The skill set required to facilitate deep learning in many classes goes beyond what typically might be expected from beginning teachers. The typically at least good teaching bears witness to the commitment of staff to go the extra mile to support the pupils' learning in RE. Pupils, in response to a survey, reported that religious education sessions were among the best in the school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education is outstanding

The subject leader is fully committed to the Church's mission for education and this is reflected in the exceptionally effective management of the department. The high expectations of the staff and pupils have contributed greatly to moulding a school population of great diversity into a harmonious whole with pupils from all traditions very happy to study and come to understand a Catholic way of life. A major strength of the work of the RE department is the successful development of some unqualified staff into fully qualified teachers of religious education. Open and innovative modelling and excellent resources are nurturing actively the dedication of staff to ensure the pupils' learning is as good as it can be. Beginning teachers are very well supported to improve the quality of their classroom provision for the pupils. Plans to enhance the subject knowledge of the staff even further are underway. The RE leader understands very well the strengths and areas for development. Self-evaluation is generally accurate, albeit, modest at times. The department leads the way in ensuring that the Newman values permeate the school alongside success in learning.

What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?

- Encourage more staff, both Catholic and non-Catholic, to enhance their subject knowledge by studying for a Catholic qualification.
- Continue the excellent work to support unqualified RE staff in gaining qualified teacher status.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school was asked previously to ensure that there were effective systems to monitor the quality of collective worship and the Catholic life of the school. In response, the school has introduced a managed pattern of events such as assemblies which is monitored through the school's leadership structures. The school has also successfully raised the profile of RE across the school and has enhanced its life of worship and prayer through chaplaincy.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

Religious education is at the heart of the curriculum and receives its full time entitlement at each key stage, including in the sixth form. The allocated accommodation has been upgraded to allow for suited rooms, the chapel is at the heart of the school, and the pupils have contributed fully, alongside staff, to the artefacts and displays around the school. Of particular note is the beautiful stained glass window made from scratch by the students with the help of the art department and depicting the English martyrs. RE permeates every aspect of the curriculum but particularly art, music and drama. Senior leaders, including the headteacher, teach in the department, highlighting its importance. The leadership of the department has the full support of the senior staff and governors and the latter play a very active role in guiding and supporting the work of the department.

The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community

is outstanding

Newman College nurtures a vibrant sacramental and prayer life that reflects the liturgical year and Newman values. The student liturgy team meets regularly to plan and evaluate religious celebrations guided by the chaplain. Pupils are actively involved in preparing and leading worship and liturgical celebrations. The recent formation of a Schola has added an important dimension to music in the liturgy. Pupils' liturgical and spiritual formation is well planned and ensures they experience the richness of Catholic tradition. The Marian procession in May to the parish shrine of Our Lady of Willesden is an important annual celebration bringing the school and parish communities together. A goodly number of staff, pupils, and occasionally parents and parishioners, attend a weekly voluntary Mass. Class and year group Masses take place in the parish weekly. Clergy from the deanery give of their time generously to support the sacramental life of the school, including for the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent and at other times. The presence of pupils and staff of other faiths and cultures enormously enriches the spiritual life of this school. Sensitive provision is made to provide prayer opportunities for those from other faiths and traditions. This is a community where 'everyone counts, everyone contributes, everyone succeeds' and this underpins the spiritual life of a community where the Gospel is lived and breathed in a truly unique way.

The contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice

is outstanding

The school contributes outstandingly well to the Common Good. Pupils flourish at the school. Their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is excellent. The school's extensive programme of charity and other collaborative opportunities empowers the pupils to respond to the needs of others. Pupils know and understand as well as they can the Gospel call to justice and service at a local, national and international level. Many members of the student community understand at first-hand what it is to be involved in challenging circumstances. Nevertheless, they still find it in themselves to come to the aid others. The school has successfully achieved the Level 1 UNICEF

Rights Respecting School award. There is a close relationship with the Salusbury project, the Paiwand, and other refugee communities. Cafod, Caritas and many other charities benefit from the time and efforts of the staff and pupils. Leaders model excellent practice in ensuring, for example, that non-teaching staff are paid the London Living Wage. Since the last inspection, the school has become a profoundly positive environment in which pupils of all faith traditions and experiences come together to grow their talents. It is a beacon of hope in its urban environment, providing an oasis of calm for local students as well as those new to the country. Newman Catholic College makes an outstanding contribution to the Common Good.

The partnership with parents, school and parish, and collaboration as an integral part of the diocese through its relationship with the diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf

is outstanding

School leaders and governors are committed to developing the college as a diocesan school within the Catholic community. The school has a very high profile in the local area, working closely with other Catholic schools and local parishes to support pupils and their parents in improving the life chances of the pupils. Of the parents who responded to the parental questionnaire, almost all were full of praise for the work of the school. Pupils regularly participate in parish liturgy and local celebrations. Clergy from many parishes support the school in celebrating Mass in the school chapel. The RE department participates regularly in diocesan events. The school works in tandem with a very successful Catholic school in developing approaches to teaching and learning. It also regularly links with primary schools to encourage the recruitment of Catholic pupils.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school

is outstanding

The leadership of the headteacher and his team, very well supported by dedicated governors, has nurtured a Catholic school that lives and breathes the Gospel values. The school expresses these not only in its Newman values and its mission statement of 'Everybody counts, everybody contributes, everybody succeeds', but also in its daily actions and long-term plans. A very diverse student body and staff have been transformed into a vibrant Catholic community with those of all faith traditions buying into the Christian message in their practice. No aspect of the daily pattern of the school is left to chance and the expectations of staff and pupils are very high. This is explicit in the personalised greeting of pupils, through the start-of-day prayers, to the harmonious collaboration of the staff and students in their learning journeys. Typically, pupils feel secure and nurtured and the ethos is summed up very well by a refugee student who commented, 'when I came, I spoke no English but I knew I was welcomed by the actions of the people around me'. Staff new to the school, and to teaching, are inducted into its Catholic life exceptionally well. The headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and governors are the driving force in sustaining and developing the Catholic life of the school. At the heart of the successful leadership of the school lies the ability to inspire all staff, including, in many supporting roles, to play a full part in the development of the young people. Administrative, catering and site staff, for example, can be overheard upholding the Newman values with the pupils as diligently as teaching staff. The school is working towards establishing a permanent chaplaincy position. Self-evaluation of the school's Catholic life is accurate. The transformational process of positively developing this Catholic school is supported very successfully by clear systems to monitor its Catholic ethos and practice.

What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?

- Work towards a permanent post of Chaplain to support further the on-going work of developing the pupils' experience of the liturgical life of the Church and of Catholic tradition.

Information about this school

- The school is a four-form entry Catholic secondary school in the locality of Harlesden, Brent.
- The school serves families from a range of adjacent parishes but mainly that of Our Lady of Willesden, Harlesden.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 45%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 21 % and from other faiths is 31%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 46%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is three.
- The published figures indicate that 9% of pupils in the school have special educational needs or disabilities. Of these, 12 have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP). However, these figures do not reflect truly the exceptionally wide range of additional learning and personal needs of the students.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average.
- There is a well above average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- The number of pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium is 191 (25.3 %).

Department for Education Number	3045407
Unique Reference Number	101564
Local Authority	Brent

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Male (Mixed in the sixth form)
Number of pupils on roll	754
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul O'Shea
Headteacher	Mr Danny P Coyle
Telephone number	020 8965 3947
Website	www.ncc.brent.school.uk
Email address	office@ncc.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2012
Grade from previous inspection	Good

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out (i) under the requirements of the Canon 806 and (ii) in accordance with the Framework for Diocesan Inspections 2015 approved by the Archbishop of Westminster and (iii) under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection.
- During the inspection 10 lessons or part lessons were observed and a learning walk undertaken.
- The inspectors attended two assemblies and a celebration of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils and governors, the parish priest and the chaplain.
- Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Mrs Sheila Nolan	Lead Inspector
Miss Catherine Bryan	Associate Inspector
Miss Anne Moloney	Associate Inspector
Mr Stuart Alexander	Associate Inspector
Mrs Geraldine Pears	Associate Inspector

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